



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

(incorporating Design and Access Statement)

In respect of a planning application for the erection of
a detached dwelling at:

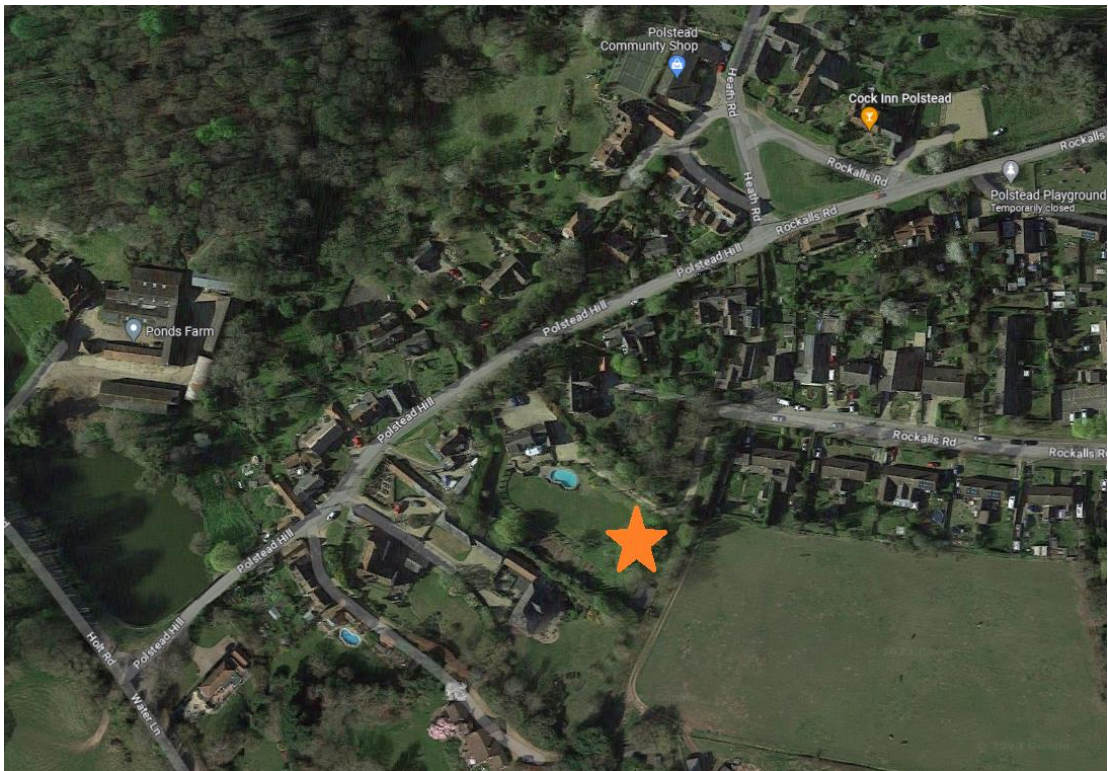
Gillyflower House, Rockalls Road, Polstead, CO6 5AH

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	The Site	4
3.0	The Proposal	4
4.0	Planning Considerations	6
5.0	Conclusions	20

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of a planning application in respect a proposal to erect a detached dwelling on land at Gillyflower House, Rockalls Road, Polstead.
- 1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.
- 1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to nearby development. An overview of the site and surrounding area is provided later in this statement.



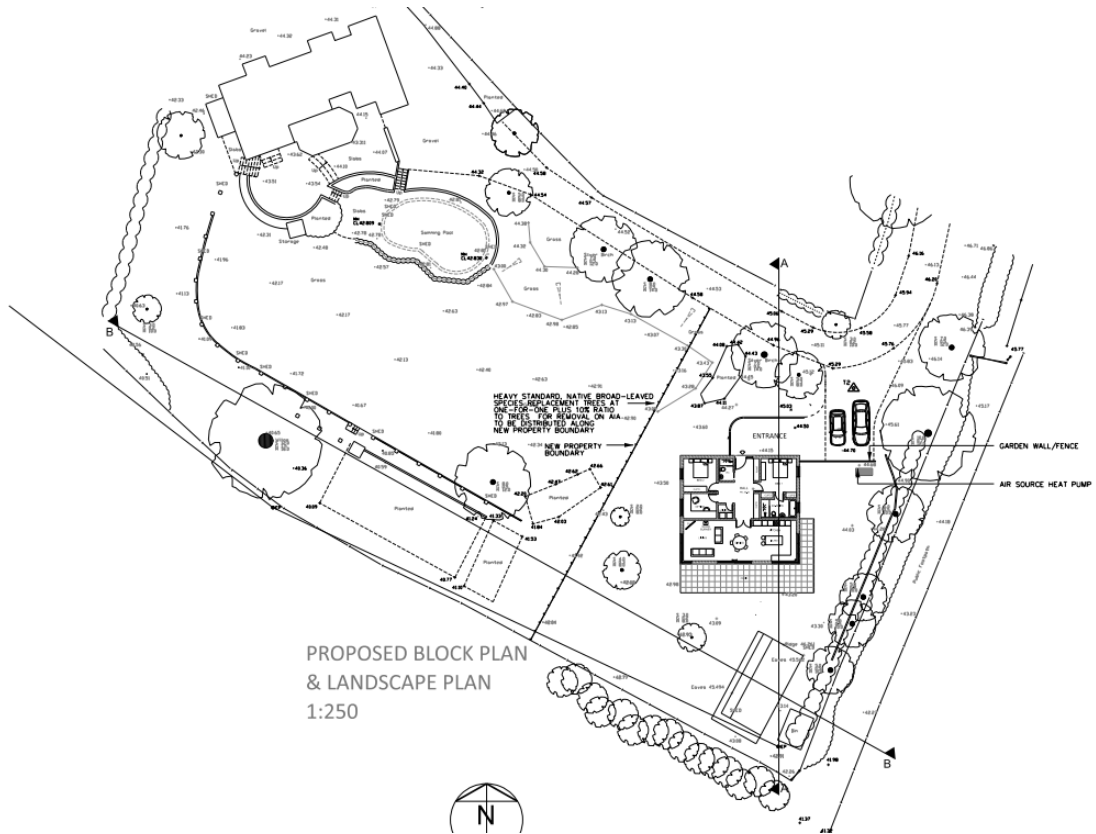
- 1.4 The application is made following a request for pre-application advice from both the Council's Planning and Heritage teams respectively. A response to that request was received on 27th April 2023 under reference DC/23/01371. That response will be referred to wherever relevant in this statement as "the pre-application response".

2.0 The Site

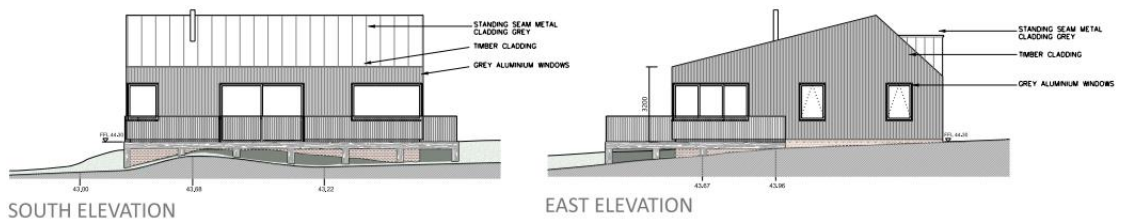
- 2.1 Gillyflower House is a detached dwelling sited adjacent to Polstead Hill and accessed off Rockalls Road. The property sits in good sized grounds with a large garden area that extends to the east. The access to the property turns south from the end of Rockalls Road and then turns westward along the northern boundary of the wider plot.
- 2.2 The land that is the subject of this proposal lies at the bottom end of the existing garden. To the east are paddocks lying to the rear of properties in Rockalls Road, which are separated from the site by a mature hedgerow and also by a public footpath that runs from the end of Rockalls Road and travels south, before turning back towards Kings Hill some distance to the south of the site.
- 2.3 The site lies within the Polstead Conservation Area, and within the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.4 It falls within Flood Zone 1 such that it is not at risk of flooding.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 This proposal is for the erection of a new single storey dwelling on the site.
- 3.2 The site would be formed from the subdivision of the existing curtilage to Gillyflower House. An existing building that lies on the site would be retained for use with the new dwelling, and the existing access would be utilised to provide access into the newly formed plot.
- 3.3 The extract below is taken from the proposed layout plan that accompanies the application submission. It shows how the new dwelling relates to Gillyflower House, the extent of the retained curtilage to the host dwelling and the new access arrangements.



3.4 The dwelling is of a contemporary form and is of single storey scale. The extracts below show the southern and eastern elevations, and provide a flavour of the scale and form of the dwelling and the way in which the proposal responds to the existing landform.



3.5 The dwelling is proposed to be finished in vertical cladding in a natural finish set under a standing seam metal roof of grey colour. Windows are proposed to be in grey aluminium.

3.6 Internally, the property would provide an open-plan living and kitchen area, two bedrooms and an office. A modest utility space and WC are also provided.

3.7 New landscape planting is also proposed to supplement the existing landscaped grounds.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 At a national level, paragraph 10 of the NPPF states; *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

4.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three objectives for achieving sustainable development:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

4.3 Policy CS2 defines Polstead as a Hinterland village, which allows for some development within the settlement boundary. This site is within the settlement boundary and thereby the principle of development can not be objectionable. Indeed, the pre-application response confirms this in the following extracts:

“This is a plot within the parish of Polstead - Church, which is classified as a Hinterland Village in the adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014). Hinterland Villages will accommodate some development to help meet the needs within them”.

“Policy CS2 states that new development in Babergh will be directed sequentially to the towns/urban areas, and to the Core and Hinterland Villages. As mentioned above, Polstead - Church is a Hinterland Village and the site falls within the built-up area boundary. The principle of providing dwellings in this location would accord with this Policy because it is located within the built-up area boundary of Polstead – Church”.

“The principle of development on this site could be considered acceptable subject to the proposal scoring positively against Core Strategy Policies CS11 and CS15, Policy CN08, CR02 and HS28 of the Babergh Local Plan, along with the consultation process following receipt of a full planning application”.

- 4.4 Whilst the principle of development is acceptable, a proposal such as this must still demonstrate compliance with the development plan policies that deal with matters of detail/impact. The provisions of policy CS11 are most relevant to this proposal and, whilst the emerging Joint Local Plan is beginning to move forward, these provisions remain valid to the consideration of this proposal at the current time and are thereby considered in detail below.

The Landscape, Environmental and Heritage Characteristics of the Village

- 4.5 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings (Sections 16 and 66). Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government’s position on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 4.6 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset to a level of detail proportionate to the assets’ importance. As set out above, this should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact on the significance.
- 4.7 Paragraph 195 requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering

the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.8 Paragraph 197 sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.9 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF apportions great weight to a designated asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF highlights that significance can be harmed or lost through physical change and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

4.10 Paragraphs 201 and 202 address how local planning authorities should deal with situations where the assessment of impacts has identified harm to a heritage asset.

4.11 At the local level, policy CN06 provides criteria against which to assess proposals that affect the setting or significance of listed buildings. Policy CN08 provides the basis against which proposals within a Conservation Area should be considered.

4.12 The site lies within the Polstead Conservation Area. Whilst Gillyflower House is not a listed building, nearby properties at Kings Bank, Corders House and The Cottage are all listed at Grade II and it was thereby recognised that engagement with the Council Heritage team should be sought at an early stage. Following that engagement, a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment also accompanies this application.

4.13 The pre-application response provides a detailed assessment of the heritage impacts that would result from this proposal. Please note that the comments below, taken directly from the pre-application response, relate to an initial proposal and that the proposal has been

amended in light of these comments to that which is now submitted for formal consideration.

The pre-application response confirms that:

1. The Heritage Team considers that the proposal has the potential to cause a low level of less than substantial harm to the conservation area and significance of nearby listed buildings within the setting.

2. However, if a small, sensitively detailed scheme is developed, the proposals need not be harmful to designated heritage assets.

3. The Heritage Team recommends that:

- additional information on levels and finished heights is provided;*

- the proposed dwelling is reduced in height and/or built into the ground;*

- materials and landscaping reinforce the rural environment of the site and surroundings.*

This pre-application enquiry relates to the erection of one, detached and contemporary dwelling within the grounds of Gillyflower House. The issues of the Heritage Team's concern relate to the potential impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the conservation area, as well as the setting and therefore the significance of nearby listed buildings.

Gillyflower House is a late 20th century dwelling which stands on Polstead Hill amongst a handful of other 20th century dwellings. There are also a number of listed buildings in the vicinity, but the most relevant to the impact of this scheme are the curtilage listed barns to the north and east of the Grade II listed Corder's House. The site also stands within Polstead Conservation Area which extends some way to the east and south, encompassing much of the undulating and verdant landscape around the village core.

The scheme has the potential to erode this part of the characteristically 'green' and maturely vegetated conservation area, due to additional buildings in an undeveloped part of the conservation area. Whilst there is some historic and more recent development in depth from the frontage of Polstead Hill, it could appear prominent in the landscape due to the topography of the site and its intended position on the hillside.

However, the contemporary and single-storey approach to the new dwelling provides opportunity to reduce and limit the scale, massing and visual intrusion in this position. I am therefore not opposed to this approach, subject to appropriate detailing.

I have some concerns about the finished levels of the proposed dwelling. The section through the site and the elevations demonstrates the notable drop in the land from north to south. On site, it seemed the land also dropped from west to east, but then raised again to the eastern boundary of the site and the position of the proposed dwelling.

The single-storey and asymmetry to the roof form certainly help to limit the height of the building, but this could be further reduced by building it into the ground level. This would have the effect of lowering the raised patio so that it does not appear to float above the ground and would lower the finished ridge and eaves heights above ground level too. It could appear prominent from the footpath to the south and east, from listed and curtilage listed buildings to the southwest, and even possibly from the road level on Water Lane. By reducing the ground levels and building the dwelling into the land rather than positioned on top, it could help to reduce the overall visual impact of the scheme in this raised position.

An alternative could be to change the form to a very contemporary, entirely flat roofed, low-profile building, and incorporate a green/sedum roof across the entirety of the roof. With this approach, it might be possible to retain the patio area in the current proposed position to make the most of the views across the valley but would lower the finished height of the building and reduce both its scale and massing. Using a green roof would also help to reinforce the 'greenness' and undeveloped nature of this part of the conservation area.

Contemporary materials are not opposed, but tonally they should tie into the surrounding rural landscaping to help it to recede into its context. Dark tones and matt materials usually work better in these instances. Boundary treatments should also amplify the character of the rural location by using soft planting rather than fencing, and minimal hard surfacing should be employed in order to avoid a suburbanising effect of the site in the setting of listed buildings and in the conserving area.

The principle of one, contemporary, small-scale dwelling on the site is not opposed, subject to a modified position and to other final details.

Sections through the site and surrounding development should be provided in an application to help demonstrate the effect of the scheme on nearby listed buildings and the conservation area, due to the undulating topography.

A reduction to the scale and massing, and/or building the dwelling into the ground would help to minimise any visual impact”.

- 4.14 As these comments confirm, there is not an objection in principle to the siting of a dwelling in this location subject to the detailed design taking account of the land levels and ensuring that the scale of the dwelling is not intrusive. The proposal would be set well away from the nearest listed buildings and separated by other dwellings and their curtilages such that it is the impact on the Conservation Area that is the key consideration here.
- 4.15 The proposed dwelling is to be sited on land in a contained position set well away from the host dwelling. Extensive outbuildings lie in the garden to the west of the site (and an existing building also lies on the site itself) , stretching back from the frontage development onto Kings Hill, and there is a dwelling sited to the south (Upper Meadow) which is set in a backland position and accessed from the public footpath that leads from Kings Hill. The proposed dwelling would not, therefore, be out of character with the pattern of development and would not require the delivery of a new access, being able to take access from the existing driveway from Rockalls Road.
- 4.16 The detailed design has sought to fully address the comments made in the pre-application response. The proposal would retain a significant garden area to Gillyflower House, ensuring that the garden is not out of scale with others in the vicinity of the site. The new dwelling can be accommodated without intrusion into the Conservation Area and would not be readily visible from most public viewpoints, though it is recognised that the public footpath does extend along the eastern boundary of the site and a suitable landscaping proposal is brought forward through this application to supplement existing hedging along this boundary.
- 4.17 The palette of materials chosen seek to ensure that the new dwelling has a relationship with its rural setting, and the proposal seeks to minimise hardstanding in the manner suggested by the Heritage Officer.

- 4.18 Residential development of the site thereby raises no heritage harm. Landscape harm will also be very limited given the visually contained nature of the site with substantial landscaped edges precluding views from the open countryside. The site essentially reads as infill, with existing development around it. The dwelling will be appreciated in the context of the existing dwellings and outbuildings and will be seen primarily in a built up context.
- 4.19 There are no other known environmental constraints that would affect this proposal.

Locational Context

- 4.20 The site is well related to neighbouring development and as such will read as forming part of the settlement forming this part of Polstead village. There are bus stops close to the site which support school bus services to Hadleigh and East Bergholt, though there will likely be some car dependency in respect to other services and employment opportunities.
- 4.21 Given the siting of the land within the settlement boundary, and its position adjacent to multiple properties, it is considered that this is a sustainable location for residential development. The site relates well to the village and would contribute to it, rather than being read as a harmful extension to it, and this was confirmed through the pre-application response also.

Locally Identified Need

- 4.22 It is not proportionate for a development of this scale to be expected to provide a Housing Needs Survey in each and every instance, and it is abundantly clear that an expectation in this regard would be inherently unreasonable.
- 4.23 Policy CS18 supports residential development that provides for the needs of the district's population, particularly the needs of older people where such local needs exist, and at a scale appropriate to the size of the development. The mix, type and size of the housing development will be expected to reflect established needs in the Babergh district (see also Policy CS15). Such a requirement is also carried through into the emerging JLP, where policy SP01 also looks at ensuring new development meets local needs.

4.24 The Polstead Housing and Population Data Profile identifies that across the Babergh district:

- 12% of all existing households contain someone looking for their own property over the next 3 years (mainly single adults without children). The types of properties they are interested in are flats/apartments, and smaller terraced or semi-detached houses. Although this is not their first preference, many accept that the private rented sector is their most realistic option;
- 25% of households think their current property will not be suitable for their needs in 10 years' time;
- 2 & 3 bed properties are most sought after by existing households wishing to move;
- Suitable housing options for more elderly people are less available within the current housing stock. 6% of all households have elderly relatives who may need to move to Suffolk within the next 3 years.

4.25 The proposal comprises a single storey dwelling containing two bedrooms. It is a modest dwelling that would meet with the identified needs in the district where the absence of smaller properties is contributing to the affordability issues being experienced, precluding first time buyers and those wishing to downsize from finding properties that suit their needs.

4.26 The applicants currently occupy Gillyflower House and wish to downsize. The delivery of this new dwelling will enable them to do that, freeing up existing housing stock in the form of a good-sized family home.

4.27 There is, therefore, no reason to suggest that the proposed dwelling would not meet the identified local need in the area. The proposal can be seen to comply with the expectations of policies CS18 and SP01, and would meet a local need in the terms envisaged by both policy CS2 and CS15 also.

4.28 It is also noted that in recent decisions in the Babergh village of Lawshall, the Planning Officer agreed that the provision of two/three bed dwellings would serve the need identified in the Neighbourhood Plan in that village, stating:

“The applicant has not provided evidence of a local need for this development and therefore in a strict, literal sense, the application is not consistent with policy CS11. This said, the

development includes smaller two/three-bedroom dwellings that will serve the need identified at Policy LAW4 of the LNP. Compliance with the LNP in respect to identified need weighs in favour of the scheme”.

- 4.29 Furthermore, in another recent application in the village of Brettenham relating to a proposal for one new dwelling (DC/18/03627), the Planning Officer considered the relevance of the ‘local need’ element of policy CS11 to that proposal. They found:

“The relevance of a housing needs survey to a single dwelling development is very limited. In strict policy terms there is a conflict however it is not fatal to the application”.

- 4.30 For these reasons, it can be seen that the proposal meets with the aims of development plan policy that seek to deliver development that meets local need, and also complies with the provisions of paragraph 79 of the NPPF which is clear that *“In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs”.*

Locally Identified Community Needs

- 4.31 The proposal does not propose a locally identified community need development. It must, however, be recognised that the scale of development is a significant inhibiting factor in this regard and any assessment in respect to community needs must be considered in this context.

Cumulative Impact of Development

- 4.32 The SPD which accompanies policy CS11 identifies, at paragraph 13, that *“cumulative impact should include existing commitments and other proposals in the same village and existing commitments and other proposals in the cluster where they are likely to have a wider impact for example in terms of traffic generation, capacity of schools and health services. The impact on other neighbouring villages and neighbouring local authority areas should also be taken into account”.*

4.33 Policy CS11 requires the cumulative impact of development both within the Hinterland Village in which the development is proposed and the functional cluster of villages in which it is located, to be a material consideration when assessing proposals under the policy. It is evident that there has been much new development approved in the functional cluster over the last few years, however, there is no evidence that the cumulative impact is harmful to the village or surrounding area. The emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP) retains a settlement boundary for Polstead, enabling development within the settlement boundary as a matter of principle. There cannot, therefore, be a realistic objection on the basis that the cumulative impact of this proposal would be overwhelming to the village.

4.34 For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the development proposal has addressed the matters identified in Policy CS11 such that the proposal can be said to comply with Policy CS11.

Sustainable Development

4.35 With regards to the three objectives of sustainable development (social, economic and environment) the proposal is considered to meet all three strands.

4.36 From an economic aspect, the construction of a new dwelling would provide much needed jobs for local people and there would be economic benefits from the purchase of materials also. Occupants of the property would contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods, their employment and involvement in community activity. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.

4.37 The social aspects of new housing are embedded in the NPPF which states that *“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”*.

4.38 It has been found that the site is in an accessible location that would offer some opportunity for travel by alternative methods of transport. The site is within a short distance of the market town of Hadleigh and the core villages of Nayland and Boxford, with their extensive range of

services and facilities. As such, the site would give future occupants the potential to travel via a variety of transport methods, thereby not providing a development that is entirely reliant on the car as its main mode of travel.

4.39 Furthermore, the delivery of this new dwelling would help to provide the supply of housing required by the NPPF and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. The proposal's contribution to the Council's housing supply should not be underestimated. The applicants intend to carry out the development in a short timescale should a permission be secured. In this regard, the site should be considered deliverable in the terms set out in the NPPF and should thereby be afforded further weight in terms of its sustainability credentials.

4.40 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposed dwelling would be built to current (recently updated/upgraded) Building Regulations standards which embed positive measures to reduce carbon emissions and energy usage. The proposal would also offer opportunities to provide an environmentally sustainable development through the incorporation of renewable energy provision, and would be constructed utilising water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods. Electric car charging provision would also be secured.

4.41 Biodiversity improvements can be offered in terms of the provision of log piles, swift bricks and bird boxes on the site which will actively encourage biodiversity on the land. New landscape planting would be provided also. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains that would support the environmental objective of sustainable development.

4.42 As such, it is felt that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that complies with the NPPF and is in line with the way in which the dimensions of sustainable development are applied by Planning Inspectors and the Planning Officers alike.

Design and Layout (including Impact on the Character of the Area)

4.43 Saved policy CN01 sets out the criteria that the Council expects all new development to meet in terms of their design and layout.

- 4.44 Saved policy CR02 of the Babergh Local Plan sets out the approach to considering proposals that affect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.45 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF identifies that *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process”*.
- 4.46 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF also seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- 4.47 The proposal seeks permission for a contemporary dwelling that utilises a combination of vertical timber cladding with a natural finish to the facades set under a grey standing seam metal roof. The building would provide interest and would be a feature on the site, making use of the changes in land levels and being orientated to provide private amenity space with a southern aspect.
- 4.48 The applicants engaged Kirkham Sheidow to carry out a robust assessment of the site and the surroundings to inform the detailed design proposals with a view to delivering a new dwelling that would respect the landscape character. This has also included the pre-application discussion with the Council, aimed at seeking to ensure that key aspects and features of the site are considered fully and taken into account. In assessing the site, three main considerations were identified, being:

- the need to ensure that the proposal was compatible with the landscape setting of the site;
- that the development should not intrude into views from outside the site, including from the adjacent footpath, and;
- the opportunity the site presented to design a contemporary dwelling that took advantage of the land levels.

4.49 The design approach here has resulted from that assessment, where the layout and design proposed responds to the specific constraints of the site through the space around the building, the lack of impact on the wider landscape and through the form of the dwelling, resulting in an enhancement on the site.

4.50 Dedicated amenity space is provided and the site facilitates both parking and turning provision. By virtue of the existing land levels, there would also be negligible impacts on the surrounding landscape. The proposed dwelling would not be silhouetted against the skyline nor would it intrude into views from the countryside beyond. It would be set against the backdrop of the significant trees and hedging that lie beyond.

4.51 The approach taken here, is, therefore, in accordance with the principles of good design set out in the NPPF and also complies with the Council's policies that address design and landscape impact, including CN01, CR02 and CS15 in particular.

Highways Access, Parking and Safety

4.52 Policy TP15 aims to create and maintain an accessible environment, requiring development proposals to provide sufficient parking facilities having regard to the Council's adopted parking standards. The indicative layout shows that on-site parking can be delivered for each of the plots, along with turning space into the private access road.

4.53 The proposal includes provision for shared access with Gillyflower House. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. According to www.crashmap.co.uk, vehicular crash data reveals that within the last 20 years, the road outside the site has not been subject to any form of vehicular collision.

- 4.54 Therefore, there is nothing to suggest that the additional use of this access would be unsafe, and this can be delivered in a manner that would be safe and suitable for all users.

Residential Amenity

- 4.55 Policy CN01 seeks to ensure that development will protect the amenity of its surrounding areas taking into account privacy, overlooking, outlook, noise, smell, light, pollution, daylight and sunlight. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF also holds regard to the protection and preservation of residential amenity, which the scheme wholly delivers. Whilst nobody has a right to keep the existing view from their home, the applicant acknowledges that the LPA will consider the effect the land use may have on the outlook from principal windows of neighbouring property. The scheme would not result in undue intrusion into the domestic enjoyment of neighbouring dwellings given the spacing which exists.
- 4.56 Given the nature and extent of the proposed use, it is unlikely that the resultant domestic use would present issue (for example, to privacy, overlooking, outlook, noise, smell, light, pollution, daylight or sunlight) extending above and beyond the established nature of the area.
- 4.57 The proposal thereby responds favorably to policy CN01 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 4.58 Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "*competent authorities*" (public bodies) to "*have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions*". A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is provided with the application which fully addresses the ecological implications of this proposal. This demonstrates that the new dwelling can be accommodated without harm, and highlights opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 4.59 The site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore not liable to flood risk. Furthermore, the land can accommodate appropriate drainage solutions to serve the proposed dwelling.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached single storey dwelling on land associated with Gillyflower House, Polstead.
- 5.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.
- 5.3 The development plan includes the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the saved policies in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006). In light of this proposal relating to the development of a new dwelling, an important factor in the determination of this proposal is that the site lies within the Built Up Area Boundary of a Hinterland Village where the principle of development is not at question.
- 5.4 The proposal has, therefore, been assessed against the three objectives of sustainable development. In respect of the economic objective, the applicant recognises that there would be benefits from the construction of the new dwelling and from the contribution made by future occupants into the local economy. The proposal is thereby economically sustainable.
- 5.5 In terms of the social dimension, the NPPF recognises the contribution made by the delivery of housing and the vitality of rural communities to the social aspect of sustainability. The site is located in a location where there is opportunity to access facilities and services in the village, and others nearby, by means other than the use of the private car. It is also the case that the social aspect of this proposal will be strengthened by the opportunity for walking, cycling and

recreating in the locality. The dwelling is of a size and form that reflects the needs in this village, thereby offering opportunity for occupation by a wide range of the community. In light of these factors, and in the absence of any social detriment, the proposal must also be considered to be socially sustainable.

5.6 The matter of environmental sustainability is, as is often the case in rural areas, more complex. The PPG recognises that there is a need to take a flexible approach to considering the potential for sustainable transport modes in rural areas and the site has been found to be well located in terms of the facilities and services that lie in proximity to the site. Key considerations in this regard are the landscape and heritage issues, given the position of the site within a designated AONB and Conservation Area.

5.7 The applicants have fully engaged with these issues. They have engaged with the LPA to consider the potential impacts on any sensitive landscape and heritage aspects, to advise on the design approach and to ensure that the proposal is adequately and suitably mitigated where necessary. Opportunities are taken to enhance landscaping and biodiversity on the site, and to utilise the existing landform to deliver a dwelling that would not give rise to harm to either landscape character or localised heritage.

5.8 The proposal can thereby be delivered on the site without giving rise to harm of environmental importance. Coupled with the utilisation of renewable technologies, sustainable methods of construction and with a siting and layout that maximises solar gain, the proposal demonstrates clear efficiency and sustainability benefits. These benefits are substantial and include:

- The construction of the dwellings would include significant insulation and energy efficient white goods and lighting;
- An air source heat pump is proposed alongside whole house mechanical ventilation (including heat recovery);
- The build would include water efficient showers and toilets;
- The introduction of ecological enhancements is proposed on the site;
- New native landscape planting is proposed;
- The proposal includes electric car charging provision.

- 5.9 These benefits are considered to go well beyond offsetting any limited environmental harm that may be considered to be occur (notwithstanding that this statement has found no such harm to occur in any event). As such, any harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, where the delivery of a new dwelling would contribute to the district's housing supply whilst meeting a local need. As such, the balancing of the main issues would result in a conclusion that the proposal is sustainable and, therefore, there would be a presumption in favour of it.
- 5.10 For all of these reasons, the proposal is found to be a sustainable development and should, thereby, be supported.